

VZCZCXRO3201
OO RUEH DU RUEH MR RUEH RN
DE RUEH SB #0491/01 1581441
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 061441Z JUN 08
FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO RHMFIS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2997
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000491

SIPDIS

FOR DS/IP/AF, DS/IP/ITA
AF/S
S/CT
CA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/06/2018
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [AMGT](#) [CASC](#) [PREL](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: HARARE EAC MEETS TO DISCUSS DETENTION OF EMBASSY
EMPLOYEES

REF: A. HARARE 489 B. HARARE 457 C. HARARE 414

Classified By: JAMES D, MCGEE, AMBASSADOR, REASON 1.4 (A) (G)

SUMMARY

¶1. (SBU) The Harare Emergency Action Committee (EAC) convened on June 6 to review the detention of Embassy employees that occurred on June 5 (SEPTTEL) and the need for additional security precautions as a result of the incident. The EAC agreed that the fact-finding and observation missions in the rural areas were essential and must continue; however, greater controls will be placed on the organization of these operations to ensure they are conducted in a safe manner. The EAC also discussed the need for further restrictions on other travel throughout Zimbabwe and agreed that the present policy of front office and RSO review before travel is approved was sufficient. The Government of Zimbabwe (GOZ) suspension of Non Governmental Organization (NGO) activities and ramifications was discussed and the EAC agreed that Consular will distribute a warden notice advising Americans and USAID Partners to exercise caution when driving in rural Zimbabwe and to fully comply with the GOZ suspension. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) The Harare EAC convened on June 6 to review the detention of Embassy employees that occurred on June 5 (SEPTTEL) and the need for additional security precautions as a result of the incident. Ambassador McGee chaired the meeting; present were RSO, CONS, MGT, DATT, POL, CDC, PAO, USAID, RPOL, MSG, and GSO. The Ambassador opened the meeting by stating that these fact-finding missions into the rural areas were essential and that the U.S. would not be intimidated by the GOZ.

¶3. (SBU) Bearing in mind the events of the previous day, the EAC discussed ways to enhance the security of observation missions into the rural areas. The EAC agreed that there was a need to balance advanced coordination with local authorities and the possibility that these notifications might provide the GOZ with information that would allow them to better interdict these operations. The EAC agreed that the Embassy would continue to submit travel notifications to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and teams would carry both a copy of the Embassy Diplomatic Note advising of the travel and a copy of the MFA diplomatic note describing the requirements of travel notification. It was also agreed that there would be greater scrutiny of team and vehicle makeup limiting the size to that absolutely essential for the mission in order to minimize the operation's footprint and vulnerability. A clear itinerary would also be provided to RSO and all teams would receive a &rules of engagement8

briefing prior to departure on how to respond to questioning or detainment by police. The EAC also discussed the inclusion of less controversial Embassies into the operations in order to reduce the probability of provoking a hostile reaction from local security forces.

¶4. (SBU) Additional security precautions were then considered for the city of Harare. The EAC agreed that while violence had increased against MDC supporters within Harare, it so far had not affected the diplomatic community; therefore, further precautions were as yet unnecessary. The EAC then considered strengthening travel restrictions for employees and Amcits within Zimbabwe. The EAC agreed that the incident of June 5 did not appear to signal a general trend by the GOZ to disrupt all travel by official and unofficial Americans. The present policy in effect to review all official travel within and into Zimbabwe was sufficient; however, Ambassador McGee stated that he will personally approve all travel in consultation with the Employee,s supervisor and RSO. The RSO will disseminate a Security Notice to this effect.

¶5. (SBU) EAC approved Consular recommendation to issue a warden message highlighting the increased risk associated with travel by road around Zimbabwe. Consular officer also suggested adding language to the warden message alerting Americans, many of whom are involved in aid and development work in Zimbabwe of the blanket suspension of aid operations and strongly recommending their full compliance with the order. USAID offered to assist in drafting the appropriate language. Consular will draft the warden message and circulate for EAC and Department clearances for earliest possible distribution.

¶6. (SBU) The EAC concluded by agreeing that it will continue to monitor the violence against the citizens of Zimbabwe and the conduct of GOZ security forces when engaging with Embassy personnel. Should either of these activities threaten American Citizens or Embassy operations, it will meet to discuss further action.

McGee